

Flight of the Bulls Recap . . . from Fred Paxton

You missed another classic Flight... Windy while driving across the San Mateo bridge.. I was convinced going to really blow.. Got to race site only John P. in lot.. Breeze just nice.. I rigged up for wind. my flat sail, and rake forward.. Still not to windy at the dock.. blowing maybe 10 in puffs.. John and I decided to run race "backwards" to get the windy run out of the way first.. John had already decided to shorten course by having leeward mark by Chevys.. Only 10 boats showed.. Except for Zander and Art none of the Steven's creek gang.. Had a flag on shore and used a mark most of the way across.. 3 minute warning.. Still not a lot of breeze.. I almost went back to get my fat boy special sail.. Just felt like was going to get windy.. and just got a text from Jennifer telling me her Ocean YRA race was moved from "going-into-the-ocean" to an inside the bay course...

Start.. was a reach going to a beat going to a run to a reach to a beat.. to that first bridge.. really split up the fleet.. 4 boats got away from the group.. John, Art, Dennis and myself.. 3 of us to bridge at same time.. at the other side was maybe 5 or 6 breeze.. I'm hurting with the mast straight up.. and flat sail... Dennis Art and I break free of John.. and I'm sorta in the middle.. we get a big lift almost all the way to the weather mark.. Dennis and Art round mark almost overlapped.. I'm about 50 ft back.. Medium wind puffs to 8 plus.. Only break is that it is a run so each puff I close a little.. and before bridge we are overlapped...all 3 of us.. looking back over shoulder I see Chris Straub has passed John and the guy who bought Greg's boat was right in the mix.. they were about a 100 yards back.. Interesting in that the 3 of us pushed up into the light wind trying to go up an around each other.. puffs to 3..... got light down there.. we round the leeward mark... Art, Fred, Dennis.. Art just barely held us off on beat to the bridge.. Dennis crossed me twice.. .. I went between shore and bride pylon .. Art went to the middle.. Dennis was just a bit to weather of me.. and said he bumped bottom... not me.. Art still out about 40 feet in front on other side of bridge.. Dennis dropped back about 50 feet and I caught right up to Art .. about 5 feet off his transom.. in one puff.. but darn darn.. could not tack as we were both being lifted.. and slowly he pull away from me.. I tried a short tack to clear my wind and was really a mistake as all of a sudden he was 50 feet out.. Art was on the lifted side and I was on the headed side with no where to go.. could not tack into the dead air against the shore.. Art rounded corner with last of lift. I had to make another tack.. really hurts to point your transom at the boat you are trying to beat.. arragh.. At least Dennis was staying back about 100 feet.. When I rounded corner giving myself a little sea room to avoid the light air against the apt buildings.. Art had a big puff and was roaring down wind.. and I was leaning to leeward keeping sail full.... was that way all the way to the bridge.. Art got 300 yards plus out ahead of me.. Dennis stayed about 50 yards behind me.. No break at the bridge either.. watched Art get a big puff that took him all the way under the bridge.. So no miracle hole to swallow my nemesis up.. He punched through the light air by the start line .. well I did gain about a 100 yards through that area but Dennis gained on me also... Went under the bridge by the start line and the breeze started to come up.. on the rail in a few puffs.. Art still out about 150 yards now.. but a beat with big big port tack lifts.. Everytime you tacked onto starboard seem like you were going back the wrong way....but you had to get out to middle to get the long lifted tack.. got Art down to about 50 yards.. by just focusing on perfect tacks and making myself tack on every little header or squeezing out each lift.. Was tricky for me using that 2.25 sail as it really takes a different style sailing at least for me.. Now the puffs were up in high teens once in a while.. Getting a little closer to the guy in

that darn white hat.. Got him looking a lot.. But Weather mark came before any happy ending.. Art still about 70 yards ahead.. I of course got to tack twice to get to mark same place that Art just lifted up to and around the mark.. guy in front sometimes gets all the breaks.. Fleet behind me had compressed a bit.. John got by Chris.. and rest of boat strung out about 400 yards.. they were struggling in the puffs.. and just sailing side to side.. Art did a great job playing the puffs off the wind and I did not close much.. well maybe a little judging by all the head turning by Art.. Puffs now down to 10 to 12.. not bad at all.. Turned into a reach beat as we got back to last bridge.. Art did a perfect job and left no passing lane anywhere.. and of course got a nice puff that carried him through the hole under the bridge.. ending any last minute miracle for the second place boat.. I finished about 40 seconds after Art.. Chris passed John and held home off on the run and almost caught Dennis at the bridge.. so top five.. Art, Fred, Dennis, Chris, John P, .. John and Dianne had a nice layout of sandwiches drinks and cookies for all.. OH and got really windy while we were eating.. had to hold my drink and bowl of salad to keep them on table in the puffs.. Was a good call for shortened course and reversing it.. John did a great job.. Art admitting to winning the last 4 or 5 times.. He does inspire me to do better.. eveytime I misplayed a shift.. driving home across the San Mateo bridge.. I bet the wind was blowing mid 30's plus.. white caps across water and only two sailboats I saw were no jibs and triple reefed mains.. Interesting in that Jennifers inside the bay course that OYRA sent them on was light and spotty in places.. they flew spinnakers to red rock and back from Red rock to Blossom buoy.. only got really nasty windy for them on last City Front leg and long-wet beat back to RYC...

1 Art Lange

2 Fred Paxton

3 Dennis Silva

4 Chris Straub

5 John Pacholski

6 Paul Zander

7 Dave Groechel

8 David Bacci

9 Jim Savattono